

Slave Bill of Sale of Jim, a Boy, Mecklenburg County, 1847 PC.2000

Finding aid prepared by Fran Tracy-Walls

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

June 11, 2014

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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June 2014
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Summary Information

Repository	State Archives of North Carolina
Title	Slave Bill of Sale of Jim, a Boy, Mecklenburg County, 1847
Date	11 December 1847
Extent	1.0 boxes One folder with one item
Language	English

Language of Materials note English

Jim was born in slavery circa 1840, and was sold at a young age in a transaction between two residents of Mecklenburg County. Possibly his surname after emancipation or after the Civil War was Johnston or Sloan.

This handwritten slave bill of sale transferred ownership of a boy named Jim from Samuel Johnston to E.B.D Sloan, possibly Edward Brice Dobbs Sloan, on 11 December 1847 for five hundred dollars.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item] PC.2000, Slave Bill of Sale of Jim, a Boy, Mecklenburg County, 1847. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC, USA

Biographical/Historical note

Samuel [C.?] Johnston (ca. 1789-1868), does not appear to have been a holder of slaves, with the exception of the young boy, Jim; and that was for an unknown length of time until the sale in December of 1847. The U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule of 1850 and 1860 do not show Johnston owning any slaves. The 1850 U.S. Census listed him living alone, a farmer, next to a son and family, James L. Johnston, a farmer; while the 1860 census listed him as a cabinet maker living with a son and family, John H. Johnston, a farmer. There is some indication that Samuel Johnston had been bound as a young man to learn the skill and art of cabinet making, and that was his primary profession.

The buyer of the boy, Jim, was E.B.D. Sloan (probably Edward Brice Dobbs Sloan), was born circa 1810 and died 1874 in Dewese Township, Mecklenburg County. He and various family members, along with family members of Samuel Johnston were buried at Ramah Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Huntersville, Mecklenburg County. There is strong indication that he did not move from the area after the acquisition of young Jim.

The 1860 U.S. Federal Census shows Sloan with the occupation of farmer, and living with a wife and children. The 1860 Slave Schedules list under his name eight slaves, with five males, having the following approximate birth years: 1820, 1830, 1840, 1842, 1847. Possibly Jim was the slave with the birth year of 1840, but it could have been earlier or later.

It is difficult to tell if Jim remained in Mecklenburg County after emancipation, or at the end of the Civil War, and what surname he would have used. There are possibilities in the census records, but no conclusive connection to the young Jim named in the 1847 slave bill of sale. Some possibilities, allowing for possible errors in age, include for example: James Sloan, age in 1870, 21: a black male residing in Berryhill, Mecklenburg County, N.C.; Edward Sloan, age in 1870, 54: a black male residing also in Berryhill, Mecklenburg County (both on 1870 U.S. Federal Census); James Johnston, age in 1880, 46: a black male living alone as a farmer in Dewese, Mecklenburg County, N.C. (1880 U.S. Federal Census); James Johnston, age 65 in 1900: a black male with a family residing in Long Creek, Mecklenburg County (1900 U.S. Federal Census).

The Samuel Johnston named in the slave bill of sale transaction does not appear to have any relationship to the well-known North Carolinian, Samuel Johnston (1733-1806), planter, member of the Continental Congress, sixth Governor of North Carolina, and U.S. Senator, and long-time resident of Edenton, Chowan County in the eastern part of the state.

Collection Overview and Transcription:

Consists of a one-page handwritten bill of sale transacted in Mecklenburg County. It transferred ownership of a boy named Jim from Samuel Johnston to E.B.D Sloan, possibly Edward Brice Dobbs Sloan, on 11 December 1847 for five hundred dollars. A transcription of the document is as follows: "State of North Carolina Mecklenburg County know all men by these presents that for and in consideration of the sum of Five Hundred Dollars to me in hand paid by E. B. D. Sloan I have bargained and sold unto the said Sloan a Negro boy named Jim. Which said Negro I warrant sound in body and mind and the title good in every respect given under my hand & seal the 11th day of Dec. 1847. Test [Witnessed by?] T E Warsham; Samuel Johnston ["seal" written within circle]

Administrative Information

Publication Information

State Archives of North Carolina June 2014

Access Restrictions

Available for research

Legal Status note

Gift

Copyright Notice

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Acquisitions Information

Gift of Charles A. Carbone, Burke, Va., 2010

Processing Information note

Processed by Fran Tracy-Walls

Finding Aid by Fran Tracy-Walls

Related Materials

Related Collections

Additional information on topics found in this collection may be found in the Manuscript and Archives Reference System (MARS) <http://mars.archives.ncdcr.gov/BasicSearch.aspx>. See in particular the Slave Collection. PC.1629 in Private Collections, State Archives, and various other private papers with an assortment of material, including slave bills of sale.

Also see in other repositories: Race and Slavery Petitions Project of the Digital Library on American Slavery. University of North Carolina at Greensboro via <http://library.uncg.edu/slavery/> and Virginia Historical Society. Slave Names Project: Unknown No Longer via <http://unknownnolonger.vahistorical.org>.

Controlled Access Headings

Family Name(s)

- Johnston family
- Sloan family

Geographic Name(s)

- Mecklenburg County (N.C.)

Personal Name(s)

- Johnston, Jim, Slave of Samuel Johnston
- Johnston, Samuel
- Sloan, Edward B. D.
- Sloan, Jim, Slave of Edward B. D. Sloan

Subject(s)

- Slave bills of sale--North Carolina--Mecklenburg County
- Slave records--North Carolina--Mecklenburg County
- Slavery--North Carolina

General note

The private manuscripts archivist who received this slave bill of sale and processed and described it has made the decision to have this document stand on its own merits as a private collection instead of placing it within the general private collection named PC.1629.Slave Collection. That collection was originally established around the mid-1970s and called Miscellaneous Slave Papers. This departure from the earlier practice represents an effort to highlight more effectively the young slave by his name and the owners full names and locale in hopes of providing easier access to clues about the early life and possible future life of this enslaved boy of African descent. Please see the Related Collections note above.

Sources:

United States Census records: 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900. United States Census Slave Schedules, 1850; 1860. Sloan family members' gravestones via findagrave.com online database: Ramah Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Huntersville, Mecklenburg County, N.C.

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Slave Bill of Sale of Jim, a Boy, Mecklenburg County, 11 December 1847	PC.2000	1